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Collective Political Violence in Easton's Political Systems Model

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Foreward

The Adversarial Intent Section (AIS) at DRDC Toronto has undertaken a Technology Investment Fund (TIF) Project entitled "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Armed Non-state Actors (ANSAs): Strategic Roles and Operational Dynamics". TIF Projects are forward-looking, high-risk – but potentially high-payoff – research endeavours conducted under the auspices of Defence Research & Development Canada (DRDC), the science and technology (S&T) agency of the Department of National Defence (DND), Canada.

The aim of this three-year (plus one) Project is to advance our understanding of:

- The **strategic roles** of ANSAs in the context of violent intergroup conflict; and,
- The **operational dynamics** – that is, the group structures, functions and processes – of ANSAs, in both their internal and external aspects, that facilitate the performance of these roles.

Broadly speaking, we seek to shed some light upon what ANSAs do and why they do it, situating their motivations, intent and behaviours in the wider context of chronic intergroup conflict.

This Technical Memorandum is one of several reports produced in Phase 1 Conceptual Development of the Project's research program.

Avant-propos

La Section des intentions antagonistes (SIA) de RDDC Toronto a entrepris un projet financé par le Fonds d'investissement technologique (FIT) intitulé *A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Armed Non-state Actors (ANSAs): Strategic Roles and Operational Dynamics* (Cadre conceptuel pour comprendre les motivations des acteurs armés non étatiques (AANE) : rôles stratégiques et dynamique opérationnelle). Les projets du FIT sont des travaux de recherche avant-gardistes très risqués – mais potentiellement très profitables – dirigés sous les auspices de Recherche et développement pour la défense Canada (RDDC), l'organisme responsable des sciences et de la technologie (S & T) du ministère de la Défense nationale (MDN) du Canada.

Ce projet d'une durée de trois ans vise à accroître nos connaissances par rapport aux aspects suivants :

- Les **rôles stratégiques** des AANE dans le cadre de conflits intergroupes violents;
- La **dynamique opérationnelle** – c'est-à-dire les structures, les fonctions et les procédés collectifs – des AANE liée à la fois à des aspects internes et externes et qui facilite l'exécution des rôles stratégiques.

En termes généraux, nous cherchons à jeter une lumière sur ce que font les AANE et à comprendre les raisons pour lesquelles ils agissent ainsi en présentant leurs motivations, leurs

intentions et leurs comportements dans le contexte plus large des conflits intergroupes chroniques.

Le présent document technique se veut le pendant de la note technique TN 2010-185 de RDDC Toronto intitulée *Proceedings of the Summit on Armed Non-state Actors: Understanding Strategic Roles and Operational Dynamics* (Compte rendu du Sommet sur les acteurs armés non étatiques : Comprendre leurs rôles stratégiques et leur dynamique opérationnelle) [novembre 2010], note publiée pendant la première phase du projet, soit l'élaboration conceptuelle du programme de recherche.

Abstract

This Technical Memorandum explores the dual systemic functions of **collective political violence** (CPV), situating it in the context of political science theorist David Easton's political systems model.

Résumé

Le présent document technique porte sur les deux fonctions systémiques de la **violence politique collective** (VPC) en les présentant dans le cadre du modèle de régime politique du politologue David Easton.

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Executive summary

Collective Political Violence in Easton's Political Systems Model:

Moore, James W.; DRDC Toronto TR 2011-019; Defence R&D Canada – Toronto; September2011.

The Canadian Forces Land Force doctrinal publication *Counter-Insurgency Operations* defines **insurgency** as "[a] competition involving at least one non-state movement using means that include violence against an established authority to achieve political change." In this view, the insurgency equation is simple and straightforward: violence is the means to power. But is that all there is to insurgent violence or **collective political violence** (CPV) more generally?

An alternative but complementary perspective on the function of CPV is presented here, situating it in the context of political science theorist David Easton's political systems model.[*] It is argued that CPV serves two critical systemic functions. First, it may be part of the system's **information feedback process**. Especially in authoritarian or totalitarian regimes where the lines of communication between the people and authorities are extremely limited and tightly controlled, CPV may be the only means by which a group or groups can signal to the authorities their discontent with the prevailing allocation of values. Second, CPV may serve as a **self-adjustment mechanism** of the system. The use of violence (within limits), allows the system to restore the critical level of popular acceptance of its authoritative allocations, whether by redistributing a particular value within the framework of the existing system (e.g., through political reform), replacing the current "allocators" within that system (e.g., via a coup d'état), or reordering the basic rules and norms by which the allocators determine and implement distributive choices (e.g., by revolution).

While CPV certainly can serve these two critical systemic functions, that is not to say that it *should*, or that it is the preferred system adjustment mechanism. Violent change – for good or bad – inevitably comes at tremendous cost. There is, however, an alternative action strategy: **political defiance,** which Sharp defines as "nonviolent struggle (protest, noncooperation, and intervention) applied defiantly and actively for political purposes." Political defiance was the *modus operandi* in the "colour" revolutions witnessed in the early 2000s, and inspired the youth uprisings in Tunisia (Sidi Bouzid Revolt) and Egypt (25 January Revolution) in early 2011. Though it cannot be denied that CPV is a force for systemic change, these nonviolent exemplars demonstrate that there are other more preferrable mechanisms for systemic feedback and self-adjustment.

[*] The essential elements of this model are set out in three of David Easton's books: *The political system: An inquiry into the state of political science* (New York: Knopf, 1953); *A framework for political analysis* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965); and, *A systems analysis of political life* (New York: Wiley, 1965).

Sommaire

La violence politique collective dans le modèle de système politique d'Easton

Moore, James W.; DRDC Toronto TR 2011-019; R & D pour la défense Canada – Toronto ; Septembre 2011.

Dans *Opérations anti-insurrectionnelles*, document doctrinal de la Force terrestre des FC, **l'insurrection** est définie comme étant « une confrontation mettant en jeu au moins une entité non étatique ayant recours à divers moyens, dont la violence, pour bouleverser l'autorité établie, et ainsi, instituer des changements politiques ». En ce sens, la formule est simple et directe : la violence est le véhicule menant au pouvoir. Toutefois, de manière plus générale, existe-t-il d'autres facteurs à la base des insurrections ou de la **violence politique collective** (VPC)?

Dans le présent document, nous présentons la VPC sous un point de vue différent, mais complémentaire, en la situant dans le contexte du modèle de régime politique du politologue David Easton. Nous affirmons que la VPC remplit deux fonctions systémiques fondamentales. D'abord, elle peut être utilisée comme **moyen de rétroaction**. Dans les régimes autoritaires ou totalitaires, plus particulièrement, comme les voies de communication entre la population et les autorités sont extrêmement limitées et étroitement surveillées, la VPC s'avère parfois le seul moyen par lequel un ou des groupes peuvent manifester leur mécontentement aux autorités par rapport au système de répartition des valeurs prédominant. Dans un deuxième temps, la VPC peut être un **mécanisme d'autocorrection** du système. Le recours à la violence peut – dans une certaine mesure – permettre à un régime de restaurer le niveau critique d'acceptation populaire de sa répartition autoritaire des valeurs, que ce soit en redistribuant une valeur particulière à l'intérieur du cadre du système en place (p. ex., au moyen d'une réforme politique), en remplaçant les « répartiteurs » actuels (p. ex., au moyen d'un coup d'État), ou en revoyant les règles et les normes élémentaires selon lesquelles les répartiteurs orientent et mettent à exécution leurs décisions (p. ex., au moyen d'une révolution).

Bien la VPC puisse accomplir ces deux fonctions fondamentales, cela ne signifie pas que ce moyen *devrait* être ou est le meilleur mécanisme de réforme. Que ce soit pour des raisons bonnes ou mauvaises, les réformes par la violence sont inévitablement lourdes de conséquences. Il existe toutefois une autre solution stratégique : la **provocation politique.** Sharp définit ce concept par « une lutte non violente (protestation, refus de coopérer et intervention) exécutée de manière provocatrice et active à des fins politiques ». La provocation politique fut le *modus operandi* des révolutions de couleur du début des années 2000 et a inspiré les révoltes de la jeunesse en Tunisie (révolte de Sidi Bouzid) et en Égypte (révolution du 25 janvier), au début de l'année 2011. Bien que l'on ne puisse nier que la VPC constitue un moyen efficace pour faire bouger les choses, ces manifestations non violentes ont montré qu'il existe de meilleurs mécanismes de rétroaction et d'autocorrection.

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1 Introduction

The Canadian Forces (CF) Land Force doctrinal publication *Counter-Insurgency Operations* (B-GL-323-004/FP-003) defines **insurgency** as "[a] competition involving at least one non-state movement using means that include violence against an established authority to achieve political change" (DAD 2008:1-2). This is the standard lense through which insurgent violence is viewed in Western militaries: violence is one of – if not *the* – principal means by which an Armed Non-state Actor (ANSA) seeks to appropriate political power from the established (and, it is assumed, legitimate) authorities in the context of an insurgency. United States (US) counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine – enshrined in the 2006 field manual *Counterinsurgency* (FM3-24/MCWP3-33.5) – echoes this perspective: "In all cases, insurgents aim to force political change: any military action is secondary and subordinate, a means to an end" (CADD 2006: 1-5).

In this view, the insurgency equation is simple and straightforward: violence is the means to power. But is that all there is to insurgent violence? Can we refine our understanding of the function of insurgent violence in societies experiencing violent intergroup conflict? This Technical Memorandum will present an alternative but complementary perspective on the functions of insurgent violence or **collective political violence** (CPV) more broadly, situating it in the context of political science theorist David Easton's political systems model. We will argue here that CPV serves two critical systemic functions: as a **feedback** and as a **self-adjustment mechanism** of the political system.

2 Collective Political Violence – A Working Definition

But first, let us derive a working definition for **collective political violence** (for a wide-ranging survey of theories of CPV, see Conteh-Morgan 2004). We begin with the concept of violence. **Violence** is the direct or indirect use of force so as to inflict physical or psychological injury to persons or material damage to property. **Collective action** refers to "any action that aims to improve the status, power, or influence of an entire group, rather than that of one or a few individuals" (van Zomeren & Iyer 2009: 646). CPV, therefore, can be defined as violent collective action that aims to achieve a group's desired political ends (broadly inclusive of macro-economic and social goals) within the structure of a society's socio-political system. The latter – the **socio-political system** – is understood here in the classic Eastonian sense, as a set of social interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society (Easton 1965a: 57). The distribution of "values" refers to the allotment of the material, ideational and symbolic assets of a society to its members, e.g., the redistribution of economic resources to individuals and groups through the welfare state, the assignment to citizens of civil rights and liberties, etc.

Box 1. Power vs. Authority

Political power is defined as "[an] agent's ability to get others to act in ways that they desire even when the subject does not want to do what the agent wants him to do." There is no need for the subject to regard the agent as possessing legitimate authority. Political power operates completely in the realm of promises and threats. Moreover, political power is the prerequisite for authority.

What distinguishes authority from power is its attitudinal dimension. An agent, operating through the institutions of the state, has **political authority** in so far as it maintains public order and issues commands and rules that are generally obeyed, because its subjects (or certain key groups therein) *believe* it to have authority in the normative sense, i.e., morally legitimate authority.

When is authority legitimate? Christiano (2008) identifies three basic conceptual accounts of legitimate political authority. The weakest is **justified coercion**, where an agent is justified in coercing those subject to its control, e.g., a state that legitimately occupies a territory in the course of a just war. In this instance, the subjects are under no obligation to obey or refrain from interfering with the agent's activities; they obey merely to avoid punishment. The second intermediate form of legitimate authority involves the **capacity to impose duties**, these being the duty of non-interference or possibly the stronger duty of obedience. These duties are not necessarily connected to the agent. The duty to obey, for example, may not be owed to anyone in particular or to people separate from the agent. The final and strongest conception of authority centres on the **right to rule**. Here, the subjects have a *moral duty* to the agent to obey and not to interfere with its activities (Christiano 2008).

The essence of CPV, then, is the use of violent means by a group to secure a share in or to appropriate to itself the power and authority (see Box 1) to define the values of a society and dictate the distribution of these resources across other individuals and groups within that society; this distinguishes CPV from, say, criminally or pathologically motivated violence employed for non-political group or individual ends. Such violent appropriative behaviour inevitably leads to conflict with other groups in society. In such **intergroup conflict**, elements of both social identity (from Social Identity Theory; see Tajfel & Turner 1979) and group-based self-interest (from Realistic Conflict Theory; see Sherif 1966) are in play (Asmore et al. 2001: 8; Fisher 2006: 178-179), as two or more self-perceived and/or ascribed groups compete for this allocative power and authority.

3 Easton's Political Systems Model

To set the general context for the examination of CPV, let us consider the phenomenon in terms of Easton's model of the political system (Easton 1953, 1965a, 1965b; see also Mitchell 1961, Sorzano 1975 and Strong 1998). In his seminal works on politics, American political scientist David Easton distinguishes a system on the basis of what it does or the primary function it performs, hence his definition of the political system as "a set of interactions, abstracted from the totality of social behavior, through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society" (Easton 1965a: 57).

Easton's systems model proceeds from the assumption that sociopolitical conflict is unavoidable, that individuals and/or groups within a society will inevitably find themselves at odds over the distribution of scarce values, whether "spiritual or material" (Easton 1953: 137). When they cannot settle these disputes privately, they seek the authoritative allocation of these material, ideational and symbolic values through the political system.

As is characteristic of any system, the political system will readjust itself when subject to stress so as to return to its original path toward some specific goal or end state. In other words, the political system is a "self-regulating, self-directing set of behaviors" (Easton 1965a: 128). But what is this end state towards which the system strives (or, more precisely, operates as if it were striving)? The goal of the political system is to persist. Easton defines **persistence** as "the perpetuation of any means through which values may be authoritatively allocated" (Ibid.). The necessary condition for persistence is the acceptance of the system's allocations as binding by most of the people most of the time (Ibid.: 96). [Easton does not concern himself with the reasons why society at large might accept these choices as binding. In that sense, his model lacks a critical element – a theory of political legitimacy (Strong 1998: 273-274).] Consequently, the political system must have self-regulating mechanisms – or "homeostatic devices" (Easton 1965a: 95) – to maintain support within its critical limits so that the system can continue to perform its identifying function, i.e., the allocation of values in a manner generally accepted as authoritative. This may be "specific support", that is, a *quid pro quo* in which support is given to the authorities in return for specific desired outputs. This, however, is insufficient for system persistence or survival. According to Easton, there must also be a reservoir of "diffuse support" or general backing given "the whole way of ordering political relationships" (Easton 1965b: 409), what I would term **system legitimacy**. This is nevertheless related to output in that failure to provide desired outputs diminishes diffuse support over time. Conversely, consistently providing desired outputs should (ideally) foster the growth of such support (Ibid.: 275).

The "first, easiest, and most direct" means to boost this support, according to Easton, is to increase the outputs of the system (Ibid.), that is, to augment the production and distribution of the material, ideational and symbolic resources demanded by society. (In a COIN context, these outputs would be security, governance and development, outputs sorely lacking currently in Afghanistan.) Alternatively, certain other variables might have to be displaced from their original positions in order to maintain the level of support above its crucial threshold. Extrapolating from this, it may be necessary, as an example, to change the system's rulers or rules, that is, to replace the value allocators and/or reform the procedures by which they determine allocations. This could be done through, say, democratic institutions and mechanisms, e.g., elections, plebiscites,

referenda, etc., or through more violent means such as coups d'état or revolution, i.e., violent political behaviours (this will be elaborated upon below).

Under ideal conditions, the self-adjusting mechanism of Easton's model works in a manner comparable to the Invisible Hand in Adam Smith's model of the economic system (Sorzano 1975: 100). The demand makers and the support givers – that is, the people – seek to maximize values by demanding outputs from the authorities or the producers of outputs. They will extend their support to the authorities to the extent that the latter can satisfy their demands. In other words, their support is contingent upon the authorities' performance in the provision of desired outputs – e.g., security, law and order, good governance, economic development, essential services, etc. – what I would call **performance legitimacy**. The authorities' ability to perform, in turn, depends upon their competence to achieve set goals, and the availability of resources to do so. If they are incompetent or corrupt and/or lack the resources to increase outputs in response to demand, the support givers will withdraw their support from those authorities, that is, the authorities lose legitimacy in the eyes of the affected segments of the population.

Support can also be lost in another way. Since the values being distributed are scarce, increasing the satisfaction of some individuals or groups takes away from the satisfaction of others. In other words, the allocation of values is a zero-sum game – one person's (or group's) gain is another's loss (hence the basis for intergroup conflict). In these circumstances, the support of the have-nots, not surprisingly, weakens. In response, the authorities, who are support maximizers, modify the distribution of outputs among these diverse and competing constituencies so as to restore their fading support among the discontented elements of society.

It is this interplay of the maximizing behaviour of the people and the authorities that ensures that, in principle, support does not fall below the critical threshold. As Sorzano argues, this mechanism operates as an automatic and self-correcting Invisible Hand that maintains the level of support needed for the system to perform its identifying function without conscious and deliberate effort to this end on the part of the system's actors (Ibid.). This does not preclude deliberate action, however. As Easton notes, individuals can deliberately and rationally create regulative devices, i.e., set up institutional structures and mechanisms, that will help keep the homeostatic variables – in this instance, the level of support – within their respective critical ranges (Easton 1965b: 116).

A central condition for the operation of the system's self-regulating process is the transmission of information – or **feedback** – from the people to the authorities (Ibid.: 83). Such feedback is essential if the authorities are to gauge the level of support within the system and the impact of their outputs upon it, and to correct their behaviour accordingly. According to Sorzano, one may infer from Easton's writings that he believes that, in modern mass societies, a democratic institutional framework – "a pluralistic and structurally differentiated set of political institutions" (Sorzano 1975: 104) and the democratic norms that underpin these institutions – is most conducive to the feedback process. Such a framework provides multiple channels of communication between the people and the authorities. As well, the authorities are more likely to be responsive to the information coming up from the people, in part due to the existence of institutional mechanisms for implementing sanctions against nonresponsive authorities – e.g., voting them out of office – one of the defining characteristics of democratic systems (Ibid.).

4 A Critique of Easton's Model

Easton's systems model offers some interesting insights into the functioning of the political system, at least at an abstract level. However, some of the assumptions underlying this model are open to debate. Take, for instance, the assumption of scarcity, the notion that the values available to achieve goals within the framework of the political system are scarce relative to demand, a condition that inevitably leads to conflict, which necessitates mechanisms for authoritatively deciding among competing claims on these values. Are all the system's values truly scarce? Consider, for example, power, "the chief resource of the political system" (Mitchell 1961:82). In one sense, power is indeed a scarce commodity in that there are physical limits to its material elements, e.g., natural resources, military capability, economic capacity, population base, etc. However, power is not simply the aggregate of a society's material resources (i.e., its hard power), but "the capacity of an agent to control the behavior of another person or group"; in other words, it is "a 'relational' matter between or among persons and groups" (Ibid.). It is as much a function of non-material factors – what international relations theorist Joseph Nye describes as the primary currencies of soft power such as values, culture, policies and institutions (Nye 2004: 31) – as it is of material resources. Is it meaningful to think of scarcity in relation to these intangible factors?

Consider another example. Can we speak of a fixed stock of freedom in a society? Does the freedom allocated to one group necessarily come at the expense of another, i.e., is the allocation of freedom a zero-sum game? For example, did the extension of civil rights to the African-American community in the US in the 1960s diminish the civil rights of the white American population? As sociologist Robin Williams, Jr. observed, "Some values, such as those of religious devotion, group pride [or group identity more broadly], community recreation, are inherently nondistributive; they are participated in rather than divided up. One person's enjoyment does not diminish another's participation in the same value complex – indeed, the value may require that others share it" (1951: 137). More generally, not all value allocation problems are zero-sum, and individuals or groups often may advance their own particular interests through cooperation with others. In game theory, this point is demonstrated, for example, in the class of coordination games, where both players can realize mutual gains but only if they choose mutually consistent strategies (see Cooper 1999).

Let us accept for the sake of argument that the salient values up for distribution are indeed scarce and that, if the demands of one group for these values are satisfied, the demands of some other group are not. According to the model, support for the regime – or the system itself – among the disadvantaged group should weaken. This, however, may not be the case. First, the disadvantaged group may not consider the unequal distribution of values to be unjust; they may feel, for whatever reason (perhaps weak or uncertain collective self-esteem), that they are not entitled to or deserving of the privileges accorded to the advantaged group. Even if they are unhappy with the system's allocation of outputs, they may not be motivated to change it. They may simply resign themselves to their group or fraternal relative deprivation (on fraternal RD, see Runciman 1966). As Martin (1986) notes, "inequalities may cause feelings of injustice, but these feelings may have little effect on behavior, causing a behavioral, if not emotional, tolerance of injustice" (238). Easton himself recognizes this possibility. He observes that peasant societies, for example, display "a kind of political impermeability, a long-suffering patience on the part of the general membership that leads to the acceptance of one's fate and either a complete absence of any

thought of politicizing one's wants or an unquestioned stifling of any urge to do so" (Easton 1965b: 109). (In European feudal society, Christianity played a critical role in this process, convincing the peasantry to accept their lot in this life in anticipation of a better life to come in the hereafter.)

If motivated to act, withdrawal of support from the system is only one possible response. Indeed, Wright et al. (1990) set out five categories of individual and collective action that may be taken in response to intergroup inequalities on the part of members of disadvantaged groups (see also Taylor et al. 1987):

> "(a) apparent acceptance of one's disadvantaged position, (b) attempts at individual upward mobility through normative channels made available by the system, (c) individual action outside the norms of the system, (d) instigation of collective action within the prescribed norms of the existing system, and (e) instigation of collective action outside the norms of the system" (995).

Easton's model touches on only three of these responses: inaction or acceptance [option (a)], or withdrawal of support for the authorities, either within or outside the confines of the rules of the system [option (d) or (e), respectively]. He does not refer to the possibility of individual normative or non-normative responsive behaviour [option (b) or (c)].

This relates to another weakness in Easton's model – the assumption that the authorities will readjust the allocation of values so as to ameliorate the dissatisfaction of disadvantaged groups in society and thereby to maximize their – i.e., the authorities' – popular support. If, as discussed above, a disadvantaged group acquiesces to the unequal distribution of outputs – and though not actively lending their support to the authorities, neither withdrawing their tacit support – then the authorities may see no need to actively court the disadvantaged group's favour. In other words, even if the authorities are assumed to be support maximizers, they need only concern themselves with maintaining the backing of the participant actors, those activists concerned with "both the input and output aspects of the political system" (Almond & Verba 1965: 16-19). They do not need to keep all groups within society happy in order to maximize their support – only those (whether a tribal, clan, sectarian, religious, class or ideological community) whose continued backing is essential to the regime's survival in power.

5 Conclusion: Collective Political Violence in Easton's Model

How, then, does the phenomenon of insurgent violence – or collective political violence more generally – factor into the Eastonian model? Two possible functions suggest themselves. First, CPV may be part of the system's **information feedback process**. Especially in authoritarian or totalitarian regimes where the lines of communication between the people and authorities are extremely limited and tightly controlled – as in Qaddafi's Libya – CPV may be the only means by which a group or groups can signal to the authorities their discontent with the prevailing allocation of values.

Does the incidence of CPV, then, indicate that the allocative function of the political system has totally broken down; to use an economic analogy, is it evidence of market failure? Not necessarily. It may be an indication that the system is readjusting itself to restore the critical threshold of popular acceptance of its policy outputs. In other words, CPV may serve as a **self-adjustment mechanism** of the system, its second possible function.

The use of violence (within limits), allows the system to restore the critical level of popular acceptance of its authoritative allocations, whether by redistributing a particular value within the framework of the existing system through political reform, replacing the current allocators within that system by way of a coup d'état, or reordering the basic rules and norms by which the allocators determine and implement distributive choices by revolution. In other words, these violent behaviours may indicate, not that the system has completely broken down – though, if the violence escalates from the instrumental to the nihilistic, this may well be the case, as in failed states like Somaliam – but that it is, in fact, alive if not particularly well at that point in time.

While CPV certainly can serve these two critical systemic functions, that is not to say that it *should*, or that it is the preferred system adjustment mechanism. Violent change – for good or bad – inevitably comes at tremendous cost. As the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development stated:

> "Armed violence destroys lives and livelihoods, breeds insecurity, fear and terror, and has a profoundly negative impact on human development. Whether in situations of conflict or crime, it imposes enormous costs on states, communities and individuals.
>
> Armed violence closes schools, empties markets, burdens health services, destroys families, weakens the rule of law, and prevents humanitarian assistance from reaching people in need. Armed violence kills – directly and indirectly – hundreds of thousands of people each year and injures countless more, often with lifelong consequences. It threatens permanently the respect of human rights" (Geneva Declaration 2006).

There is, however, an alternative action strategy: **political defiance**, also referred to as nonviolent resistance or nonviolent struggle. Gene Sharp, the American intellectual guru of nonviolent action, defines this as:

> "nonviolent struggle (protest, noncooperation, and intervention) applied defiantly and actively for political purposes…The term is used principally to describe [nonviolent] action by populations to regain from dictatorships control over governmental institutions by relentlessly attacking their sources of power and deliberately using strategic planning and operations to do so" (Sharp 2010: 1).

Political defiance has a long and surprisingly impressive record, from the 1905 Russian Revolution to the 1986 "people power" movement in the Philippines (see Sharp 2005 for analyses of twenty-three case studies of nonviolent struggle in the twentieth century). More recently, it was the *modus operandi* in the "colour" revolutions witnessed in the early 2000s: Serbia's Bulldozer Revolution (2000), Georgia's Rose Revolution (2003), Ukraine's Orange Revolution (2004), Lebanon's Cedar Revolution (2005) and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution (2005). These methods – and Sharp's writings (Stolberg 2011) – also inspired the youth uprisings in Tunisia (Sidi Bouzid Revolt) and Egypt (25 January Revolution) in early 2011 that swept aside the aging autocrats who had stifled change in those societies for so many years (Kirkpatrick & Sanger 2011). Though it cannot be denied that CPV is a force for systemic change, these nonviolent exemplars demonstrate that there are other more preferrable mechanisms for systemic feedback and self-adjustment.

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(U) collective (VPC) en les présentant dans le cadre du modèle de régime politique du politologue David Easton.

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